

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TANANA 01788 190700Z

21

ACTION AF-07

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 L-02 SCS-03 SCA-01 CIAE-00 INR-05

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R 181340Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6712

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, MA (REPPAS, GEORGE)

SUBJECT: REPPAS CASE

REFS: A. TANANARIVE 1776

B. TANANARIVE 1762

C. STATE 250639

1. CONSOFF CALLED ON REPPAS LAWYER LEBEL AS INDICATED
REFTEL A. LEBEL UNSURE OF POSSIBLE DATE OF APPEAL BEFORE
SUPREME COURT BUT HOPED THAT DECEMBER HEARING STILL
POSSIBLE. LEBEL SAID HE HAD RECEIVED INFORMATION THAT
PROSECUTION'S REPORT WAS BEING REDRAFTED, WHICH MIGHT
CAUSE FURTHER DELAY.

2. IF PROSECUTION'S REPORT NOT FINISHED BY END OF
DECEMBER, APPEAL WOULD PROBABLY NOT BEGIN UNTIL END
JANUARY 1975 OR BEGINNING FEBRUARY. LEBEL STILL
CONVINCED "VISITE DE RENSEIGNEMENT" BY EMBASSY OFFICER
MIGHT SPEED PACE OF PROCEEDINGS.

3. IN DISCUSSION OF RECENT AIRPLANE THEFT (REFTEL B),
LEBEL THOUGHT THAT IT HAD DEFINITELY HURT REPPAS CASE.

HE FELT RENEWED PUBLIC ATTENTION WOULD MAKE GOMR
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PAGE 02 TANANA 01788 190700Z

OFFICIALS MORE SENSITIVE ABOUT TAKING ANY ACTION THAT MAY

SEEM BENEFICIAL TO REPPAS. NEVERTHELESS, LEBEL PLANS TO FILE FOR "LIBERTE CONDITIONNELLE" AFTER HALF OF CURRENT REPPAS SENTENCE SERVED IN APRIL 1975.

4. EMBASSY COMMENT: DESPITE AGM AIRPLANE THEFT, WE BELIEVE GOMR OWES US RESPONSE TO AMBASSADOR'S APPROACH TO GENERAL RAMANANTSOA. WHILE PLANE THEFT MAY MAKE GOMR MORE SENSITIVE, MOFA CONCEDED CHARGE'S POINT THAT PRESS COVERAGE WAS IRRESPONSIBLE IN LINKING REPPAS TO THEFT AND IN ITS SUGGESTING THAT REPPAS MAY HAVE ESCAPED WHEN SIMPLE CALL TO PRISON WOULD HAVE ENDED SUCH SPECULATION. IF GOMR IS DISPOSED TO RELEASE REPPAS, AIRPLANE THEFT MIGHT AFFECT TIMING BUT SHOULD NOT AFFECT SUBSTANCE OF DECISION. CONSEQUENTLY, EMBASSY BELIEVES DEPT'S RAISING REPPAS QUESTION WITH MALAGASY AMBASSADOR IS APPROPRIATE. EMBASSY DOES NOT PLAN TO SEEK APPOINTMENT FOR "VISITE DE RENSEIGNEMENT" UNTIL RESPONSE RECEIVED OR UNTIL IT IS CLEAR THAT THERE WILL BE NO RESPONSE.
ELFERS

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